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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6197
INFO RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0649

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 003203

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NSC FOR DAVID MERKEL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2026

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE JUNE 4 VISIT OF DEPUTY
NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR DR. JD CROUCH

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (B,D).

Summary

1. (S) Your visit to Turkey comes at an important moment. Foremost on our immediate agenda is ensuring Turkey's sustained support for Secretary Rice's May 31 announcement that we will join EU-3 talks if Iran suspends enrichment and reprocessing. Turkish officials will be interested in hearing U.S. views on the way forward on Black Sea security cooperation. You will hear Turkish frustration over PKK terrorism and impatience with US inaction against PKK camps in northern Iraq. You will also find anxiety about further regional instability that is fueled by fears that Iraq will fragment, Palestine will implode, and Iran and the West will collide militarily. Despite these concerns and the fact that public sentiment toward the US remains largely negative, this government is committed -- in public and in private -- to working with us to find a new paradigm for partnership. To that end, we are putting the final touches on a "Shared Vision" paper, announced during the Secretary Rice's April 27 visit, committing ourselves to cooperating more closely on regional and global issues. End Summary.

Bilateral Relationship Improving

2. (S) During her April 27 visit to Ankara, Secretary Rice and FM Gul announced our intention to set up a formal and regular senior-level strategic dialogue consultative mechanism. The goal was to signal progress toward restoring confidence and strengthening our ability to work together in ways helpful to our goals in the region and in Turkey itself. We are now negotiating the final touches of our "Strategic Partnership" document, which should be made public soon. We have restored bilateral dialogue through many senior level visits over the past ten months. We have shifted our dialogue on Iraq from one dominated by Turkish whining about the PKK and Kirkuk to one of constructive collaboration politically and logistically in support of our efforts there.

3. (S) The February HAMAS visit to Ankara set this back more seriously than Turkish officials are willing to admit. Bitterness towards Turkey remains in some parts of Congress and especially within the American Jewish community. HIRC staffer Alan Makovsky met Gul and other officials recently and conveyed Congressional views. Turkey has made efforts to patch things up. Abu Mazen was promised Turkish political support during his April 26 visit to Ankara and Israeli FM Livni was received warmly here on May 29. President Sezer will visit Israel on June 10. The Turks told Livni of their concerns that lasting peace cannot be achieved in the Middle

East if Israel decides to unilaterally set its borders and were reassured by Livni's assertions that Israel would prefer a negotiated settlement, though it currently has no viable negotiating partner.

¶4. (S) Here in Ankara, internal politics have moved to the fore. The May 17 shooting at the High Administrative Court that killed one judge and injured four served as a catalyst for secular/military demonstrations, heightening tensions in the already difficult relationship between PM Erdogan,s pro-Islam Justice and Development Party (AKP) on the one hand, and the secular/military establishment on the other. The focal point is the May 2007 presidential election, when parliament -- currently firmly under AKP,s control -- will elect Turkey,s next president. The secular establishment views as anathema an AKPer in Ataturk,s chair -- particularly one whose wife wears an Islamic headscarf. Secularists, themselves badly divided, continue to lobby for early general elections (due by November 2007), in the hope of changing the parliamentary mix in advance of the presidential election. Erdogan continues, just as firmly, to reject that possibility.

Key Issues

¶5. (S) Iran: Secretary Rice personally informed Gul May 31 of our decision to join the EU-3 and meet with Iran's representatives once Iran fully and verifiably suspends its enrichment and reprocessing activities. Official and public reaction to this initiative has been uniformly positive. The GOT has publicly supported this move and called upon the Iranians to respond positively. Turkish officials have taken a tougher line on Iran since Greg Schulte's March visit. Gul has told visiting Congressional delegations that Iran's

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nuclear weapons aspirations are the single most important problem facing Europe and the Middle East, and he has emphasized the need for a united and decisive international approach. Ankara has called on Tehran to cooperate with the IAEA, adopt full transparency on its nuclear programs, and resume negotiations with the EU-3, most recently in Erdogan - Ahmadinejad encounters in Baku and Bali and during an early May visit by Larijani.

¶6. (S Black Sea Security: Turkey believes that Russian involvement in Black Sea security structures is essential for their success. This, coupled with Ankara's pride of regional leadership, has produced Turkish resistance to expanding non-littoral (including NATO and the U.S.) naval involvement in the Black Sea. But this reticence does not apply to cooperation ashore. Turkey is a strong supporter of and participant in NATO Partnership for Peace activities with others in the region, hopes for the Minsk Group's success in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, coordinates with us on security assistance to Georgia and Azerbaijan, participated in EUCOM's spirit-of-PfP exercise Sea Breeze 06 in Ukraine, conducted bilateral naval exercises with the USN, and welcomed a USN vessel to the Black Sea port of Samsun. Thus, Turkish reaction to our new strategy towards the region, which was previewed to Ankara in April, has been generally positive.

¶7. (S) Turkey greatly appreciates our efforts to convince Romania and Bulgaria to join its maritime policing operation, Black Sea Harmony. While Ankara understands that BLACKSEAFOR will not become the operationally focused organization it envisages anytime soon, it has not given up the hope that the other littorals will eventually agree to expand BLACKSEAFOR's mandate. After initial opposition, Turkey has participated in the preparatory work for the Black Sea Forum you will attend in Bucharest and will be represented there by Minister of State Besir Atalay.

¶8. (S) Cyprus/EU: Ankara feels cornered by the EU's

insistence that Turkey open its ports to Cypriot goods, its incessant reform demands -- including on issues that seem impossible to them (Cyprus, the Greek Patriarchate, Kurdish rights), and the anti-Islamic/anti-Turkish sentiment in many EU capitals. Incidents in the Aegean (e.g., the May 23 fighter aircraft accident and more recent confrontations around Imia/Kardak) could further complicate matters if both Turkey and Greece do not resist their natural tendencies towards nationalistic righteous indignation. The Turks need to respond positively to the UN-brokered technical talks on Cyprus and stop complaining about Kofi Annan's Cyprus representative. Senior Turkish officials also need to spend more time courting European allies in the EU process. The appearance and reality of steady progress on reform is essential for keeping the EU bicycle aright. The Halki Seminary and other Greek Patriarchate issues are hard for Turkey, but progress would do wonders for Turkey's image in Europe and the US and put beef in the "Alliance of Civilizations" bun.

¶9. (S) HAMAS: Erdogan and Gul remain defensive about the HAMAS visit. They see a rejected and rejectionist HAMAS as something that will aggravate instability, worsen the 'clash of civilizations,' and bolster Iran's influence, which they do not want. But Gul understands the need not to dig a deeper hole for Turkey: with some prompting, he criticized HAMAS' failure to condemn the Tel Aviv bombing. Gul will probe for ways Turkey can be helpful and will want to describe FM Livni's May 29 talks here. Consulting with the Turks on how we see the Middle East developing in coming months will be helpful.

¶10. (S) Iraq and the PKK: The government and public here remain worried by recent developments in Iraq, signs of civil war and fears of Iraq's breakup. Rising PKK violence in Turkey aggravates this. Turkey has welcomed the establishment of the new Iraqi government and Turkey's Iraq Coordinator Celikkol went to Baghdad (thanks to Embassy Baghdad assistance) May 30 to announce Turkey's support, present the Iraqis with a proposal for security cooperation, and invite Iraqi officials to visit Ankara. Turkey has expressed disappointment with what it perceives as inadequate Turkmen representation in government ministries and on the Iraqi National Security Council, and remains concerned with Kirkuk's status. You may wish to reiterate our commitment to helping with the PKK problem and our readiness to participate in trilateral talks with Turkey and Iraq on security as soon as practicable. We are encouraging FM Gul to visit Iraq soon.

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¶11. (S) Armenia: The Turks realize that this always difficult issue is now harder because of HAMAS. Erdogan is counting on the Administration to pull out all stops to prevent passage of genocide language. Turkey has reached out to Armenia in recent months with proposals for a mutually-acceptable Turkish-Armenian mechanism to review the history and begin laying the groundwork for reconciliation and normalization of the bilateral relationship. Yerevan has responded tentatively and contacts continue. We are urging the Turks to consider opening the Armenian border, especially in the context of an Armenian-Azeri peace deal.

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